

Saint Francis Solanus



MAY 2020

Mission Weekend with Paul Koleske

Renowned Catholic Speaker Coming to Quincy May 9-11

With our Franciscans relinquishing St. Francis Solanus Parish to the Diocese of Springfield this July, Fr. Don wanted to have a special event to celebrate the Lord's blessings on us over the last 160 years and ask for His blessings over this change. The mission slated for May 9, 10 and 11 with Catholic inspirational speaker Paul Koleske will offer that opportunity.

Koleske's presentation, "Igniting the Light of Christ Within You," will incorporate not only his talks, but also his original songs inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Don will introduce Paul during the weekend Masses May 9 and 10, and the missions will be held at 6 p.m. on May 10 and 7 p.m. on May 11. Each session will last 90 minutes in the church itself.

"I'm going to cover my own conversion story," Paul says. "I had a miracle happen in which God spoke to me through it. I'll talk about the true presence of Jesus at each Mass and I'll talk about the miracle of the Mass itself, what happens supernaturally at Mass. The last thing I'll talk about is the miracle of you — of everyone attending."



Paul Koleske will lead a two-day Mission, "Igniting the Light of Christ Within You," on May 10 and 11.

The "miracle of you" Paul references is that God has given all of us great gifts in our mental and physical resources, and has done so for the edification of our spirit, and to build up the Church.

"I'll remind everyone that we are called to be

continued on page 5



KEEPING THE FAITH DURING A CRISIS

Adversity is a part of life. We may face family strife or financial issues. We may experience a personal or family medical crisis. We may suffer the loss of a loved one.

The thought of not being able to attend Mass to receive the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord as a result of a crisis — such as the one we are experiencing today with the COVID-19 pandemic — is devastating.

Right now, it may seem challenging to remain a faithful steward. We may even question our faith and wonder how to find God during these turbulent times.

Where do we turn?

First and foremost, we must pray without ceasing. During a difficult time, you can always turn to the Church's treasury of prayer. Take time each day to read the daily Scripture readings — they can be found at USCCB.org, and then by selecting the date on the calendar on the home page. You can also use the many rich resources of our faith to engage in spiritual reflections each day as an individual and with your family. This can include simple prayers like an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* a few times a day, as well as praying the Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Stations of the Cross, among others. Many resources for these are easily found online.

It is also important to remember that at times when you cannot physically attend Mass, Sunday remains a holy day, and you are encouraged to pray. You can participate in prayer by way of televised or live-streamed Mass — one option for viewing daily Mass online can be found at www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass.

During times of crisis, we must also find ways to use our talents to serve God. If you are unable to participate in ministries and serve your parish community, you can still use your talents to serve your family and those closest to you. Something as simple as calling to check on family and friends — or even doing a video call — can go a long way.

Finally, we must try to remain good stewards of our treasure. You may have lost your job or have seen a reduction in work hours and pay. But despite your hardships, a faithful steward must faithfully try his or her best to return a portion of your treasure

to God however He is calling you to do so. Check the parish website, stfrancissolanus.com, for online giving opportunities and do what you can to return a portion of your treasure to God.

No matter the situation, God always remains faithful to us. Don't forget that everything God gives us is a gift, and the way in which we share our gifts with God and our neighbor is ultimately how we give Him glory.



An Act of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the
Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to
receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive
You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.*

A Letter From Our Pastor

Honoring Our Lady in May

Dear Parishioners,

May is Mary's month. For centuries, Catholics throughout the world have included special devotions to the Blessed Mother in their activities during May. Best known, I'm sure, is the widespread and ever-popular practice of crowning an image of Our Lady with flowers during the course of the month.

May is a beautiful month, full of renewal and hope. The March winds and the April showers have done their work, and the spring flowers are in bloom. Even though the earliest signs of spring have passed, May doesn't quite have the look or feel of summer. It is spring at its finest! And it's not only the flowers or trees that show

new life in May. For many students, May is the month to prepare for graduations, and these students will soon move on to new phases in their lives.

And of course, May is a month of joy for all of us who claim the Church as our spiritual home. We spend the whole month this year in the Easter season, which closes with Pentecost on May 31. The joy of the Resurrection, the glory of the Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit are the themes that fill our Christian calendar.

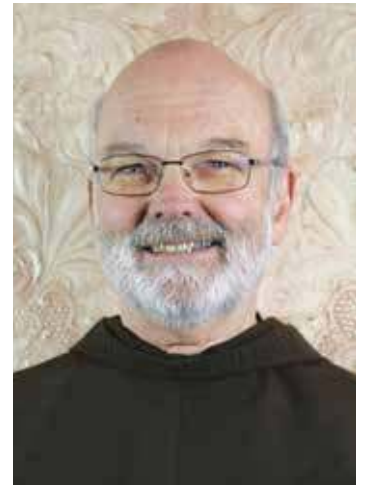
But as we rejoice with Mary at her Son's triumph over sin, Satan and death, we remember her faithfulness to God's will throughout her life. Indeed, she can be viewed as the model Christian steward. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops pointed to her in its pastoral letter on stewardship: "After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 41).

Let us follow her example of total dedication to God as we rejoice in the blessings He gives us this month!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Don Blaeser, O.F.M.
Pastor



Open to the Call of Christ, Ladies

Thanks to generous donors who provide household items and monetary gifts, our Ladies of Charity Ministry is able to not only be the face of Christ for those in need, but also see the face of Christ in those seeking help.

The Ladies of Charity is a Vincentian organization whose motto is “To serve rather than be served, in humility, simplicity, and charity.” Volunteers staff a center — located at 4th and State — where items are distributed for free, on Mondays and Fridays. Ladies of Charity volunteers also staff a thrift store at 24th and Elm, where donated items are sold from Tuesday through Saturday.

Jane Haas is President of the Ladies of Charity. The group has about 120 active volunteers, and there

are 75 additional members who offer support through prayer and donations.

“Some of the latter have long given of their time and talent, and now they are older,” Jane says.

The Ladies of Charity take in donations of a wide variety of items. They cannot take mattresses or some baby beds and car seats, as well as some electronics, such as older television sets.

“But if household goods have some life left in them, we can use them,” Jane says. “We aren’t set up to take large furniture items because we don’t have the space.”

Clients who come into the center are typically seeking clothing, diapers, household items, or food. They may receive items once a month. There is no proof of need or income required — all that are needed are a photo ID and a proof of where they live.

“We ask for that, but we aren’t tied to it, if we can sense there is a need,” Jane says.

The money earned by the sale of items at the thrift store, along with donations, make it possible to provide the items for those in need.

“We appreciate all the wonderful donations of clothing and household items from people all year,” Jane says. “Without those, we couldn’t exist. We’re the middleman who organizes the donations, put them out, and have them available.”

A common thread running through Jane’s work overseeing the operations of the center and thrift store is that of how her work strengthens her faith life.

“I feel I’m following one of the corporal works of mercy — feeding the hungry and clothing the needy by doing this,” she says.

She also believes that working with the Ladies of Charity is truly living in stewardship.

“Oh, absolutely, yes,” she says. “That’s what we do — sharing what we have from the thrift store. We organize, sort and get it all ready and sell it, with the money coming to the center, so we can offer items.”

Stewardship is also in action as the Ladies demonstrate their care for the clients through their attitude and interaction with them.

“Our goal is to share Christ with them and see Christ in them,” Jane says. “So, the Ladies of Charity seek to be open to the call of Christ through the Catholic Church. We seek every opportunity to make Christ present.”



At a past Christmas party, members of the Ladies of Charity at St. Francis had fun dressing as nuns and getting their photo taken with Bishop George Lucas

s of Charity Help Those in Need

Although the group does not actively work to evangelize the Catholic faith, the members are grounded in practicing their faith. The Ladies have a morning and noon prayer to recite, and also have a day of recollection once a year that helps grow their faith. New members make a pledge to follow in the ways of St. Vincent de Paul. At that time, they receive a crucifix.

"There is a strong spiritual component to the group," Jane says. "We don't specifically plan to bring people to Christ. We do our thing and be Christ to them and see Christ in them."

Any woman is welcome to join the Ladies of Charity. The group is a Catholic organization, but there are some non-Catholics taking part.

"We do have a steady flow of volunteers, which is very good," Jane says. "We need them."



Tables set for a fun and elegant Ladies of St. Francis Christmas party

Those interested in joining the Ladies of Charity may call Jane Haas at 217-257-0533, the center at 217-222-6359, as well as at the thrift store at 217-222-3541.

Mission Weekend with Paul Koleske *continued from front cover*

prophets to the nations — we all are," Paul says. "I'll remind them of the vow most have taken to do just that, through our Godparents at Baptism and our Confirmation sponsors. They agreed to see that our soul is steeped in faith."

During the first night of the mission, Paul will talk about "Connecting With the Light of Christ." On the second evening, he will talk about "Experiencing the Light of Christ."

A sub-theme for his talks will be how we can have more "Holy Spirit moments," asking, "How do we feel the presence of the Holy Spirit more?" He will also discuss the number of things that impede our ability to have "Holy Spirit moments."

"You can have the greatest theology in the world, as we do, as Catholics," he says. "But with our attitude and 'slot' thinking, it's harder for God to work His magic through you. He needs cooperation from us."

The second night of the mission will be aimed at helping us break patterns of fear, doubt, worry, anxiety, guilt and anger.

"My whole ministry is designed to help Catholics feel an increased presence of the Holy Spirit in their everyday lives," Paul says.

By the time Paul arrives here at St. Francis, he will have visited in 46 states and 107 dioceses.

"The response has always been really great to the teaching message in music," Paul says.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the details of this event may change. Please see our parish bulletin and website for updates.

New Parish Directory

Building Community and Family in Our Parish

As members of a stewardship community we know about the three key aspects to stewardship — time, talent and treasure. But we also know there are four pillars to parish stewardship — hospitality, prayer, formation and service. This summer, our parish community will have an opportunity to build on the first stewardship pillar of hospitality through the new parish directory. Every one of us needs to contribute to make this effort a success.

“We want our church to feel like an extended family,” says Erin Schrage. “When we can add faces to names we are familiar with, this helps.”

“With about 4,000 parishioners, it’s easy to get lost in the crowd,” says Fr. Don Blaeser. “This is a wonderful way to be in touch with each other.”

Lifetouch will be at our parish from mid-May through the summer to take family photos for the directory. Evening and weekend appointments are available. Not only does this offer your family the chance to be pictured in the directory, but each family also receives an 8x10 photo. Additional photos may be ordered through Lifetouch, and coupons are available to families who bring food pantry donations.

Photos are free — Fr. Don says if you don’t want to order any photos, you can feel free to decline. This service, which is free to our parish, offers a chance to update your family photos. Contact information for



each family will also be included in the directory.

“Being this is our 160th year as a parish, this is a great way to celebrate,” Fr. Don says. “It’s a piece of history of who was a member of our parish this year.”

“We can watch our parish grow, and what a great resource for new parishioners to use to feel more at home,” says Erin.

Fr. Don says the directory is also extremely helpful for parish staff to put a name to a face.

“I just referenced mine this morning,” Fr. Don says. “I look at it all the time.”

Fr. Don realizes that while some people don’t like to have their photo taken, he urges parishioners to think of this as not for themselves — rather, it’s a useful tool for others in the parish to get to know each other.

“This might not make a difference to you,” Fr. Don says. “But, it matters to others. And it doesn’t take much time to have it done.”

Erin says this is also a great way for ministry members and leaders to get in touch with people or to put a name to a face. Ministries and parish staff are also pictured in the directory.

“Our goal is to have everyone in our St. Francis Solanus family represented in our new directory,” Erin says. “Any time we can build a sense of community and family, we win as a parish.”

Erin recommends that families wear solid colored or minimal patterned clothing. Hair and makeup should be kept simple and natural.

If you would like to register for a time to have your family photo taken, please refer to the bulletin or visit our parish website at stfrancissolanus.com.

The Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion *Transformed by Sacramental Grace*

Though we were each made new through the sacred waters of Baptism, like the apostles in the upper room we still need additional graces in order to truly live out the Gospel message. Director of Religious Education Mike Holbrook explains that this is the great gift of the other two Sacraments of Christian Initiation — Confirmation and the Eucharist — which lead us on a journey of increasing intimacy with our Lord and infuse us with the courage needed to fully embrace our baptismal calling.

“The Eucharist is indispensable to the life of the Church,” Mike says. “It is the heart of the Church. One of the reasons why is because through it, Christ unites every single one of us through the Cross. And Confirmation is significant because the children are now given the strength to do what their predecessors — the apostles — did. It gives them the courage to leave that upper room and live out the faith and build up the church community.”

It’s this relationship with one another that makes Mike so enthusiastic about the relatively recent decision of Diocese of Springfield, Ill. to return to a restored sacramental order. This way, instead of fully separating the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation, Confirmation and First Holy Communion are now received by young Catholics together, properly

emphasizing the Eucharist as the true pinnacle of Christian life.

“This allows the Eucharist to stand out as the zenith of the faith journey — the sacrament that truly completes our initiation process,” Mike says. “This also helps us break away from the mindset of Confirmation as a kind of graduation. Instead, we teach the children that it perfects the baptismal graces received — that it fans the flame of the Holy Spirit and gives them the strength to more fully commit their lives to Christ and become witnesses of His love to the world.”

In preparation for this significant step in their faith journey, St. Francis

Solanus School and Parish School of Religion (PSR) children participate in a two-year preparation process, beginning their second-grade year and culminating towards the end of third grade. This year’s sacramental class consisted of a total of 35 parish youth.

Mike says he has been moved by the children’s openness and eagerness for the sacraments. It’s a powerful witness to us adults, reminding us of our own sacramental graces and the need to approach the sacraments with the same enthusiasm and reverence.

“One of the beauties of the children receiving the sacraments at such a young age is that they are so open and excited about it,” Mike says. “They are



The Sacrament of Confirmation, says parish Director of Religious Education Mike Holbrook, is “significant because the children are now given the strength to do what their predecessors — the apostles — did. It gives them the courage to leave that upper room and live out the faith and build up the church community.”

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St. Francis Solanus

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

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The Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion

continued from page 7

giving us an example of how we should also approach the sacraments — reminding us that we need to approach the Eucharist with that same enthusiasm. Jesus says that we need to become like children if we want to get to heaven, and I think that we all have lessons to learn from these third-graders.”

Moving forward, Mike hopes and prays that the children will continue to rely upon these sacramental graces, drawing strength from them and allowing

them to truly become living saints. He’s also excited to see those graces at work both within our parish and community at large.

“I just know that we are on the right track with this restored order, putting Confirmation and the Eucharist in their proper places,” Mike says. “I believe that it’s the right thing to do and that we will really see the benefits in years to come, especially in the lives of our children.”

*If you would like more information about sacramental preparation,
please contact Mike Holbrook at 217-222-2898.*

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 6:30, 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m.

Weekday Mass: M, T, W, Th, F, 6:30 a.m. | M, T, W, Th, F, S, 8:00 a.m. | W, 8:35 a.m. during school year

Confessions: Saturdays 8:30 a.m., 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil 5:30 p.m.; Holy Day: 6:30 a.m.; 8:35 a.m. on school days; 8:00 a.m. during summer; 5:30 p.m.